

DATE: March 7, 2007
TO: Members of the Senate Education and Cultural Affairs Committee
FROM: Bob Anderson, Fort Benton School District
RE: **HB 347**

Testimony on HB- 347 "AN ACT INCREASING THE AMOUNTS FOR WHICH A CONTRACT IS NOT REQUIRED FOR BUILDING, FURNISHING, REPAIRING....."

Fort Benton School District Trustees have always followed the law (20-9-204) with regard to bidding of building, maintaining or repairing school facilities. They care enough to get the best quality product or service they can afford for the lowest possible cost. However, when there are cases where the job cannot be done by current staff members or there are limited contractors to do a specific job.....then bidding does not provide the answer. There have been times when we have gone through the motions of bidding simply to satisfy the letter of the law.

What has changed significantly over the past six years since the \$25,000 limit was placed on projects to be bid has been the cost of materials. For example, the cost of steel roofing has gone from \$1.21 to \$2.20. per lineal foot in just 16 months. A roofing project that Fort Benton completed just over a year ago which cost \$24,000 now would cost approximately \$46,000.

HB 347 will give more flexibility to either bid or not bid small projects. Fort Benton Trustees appreciate this option and will exercise it only when it means a better deal for the use of School District dollars.